First of a Series on

AFRICA AND ITS PEOPLE

AFRICA, LAND OF CONTRASTS

by

EDITH FLEMING

Raymond Foundation

Museum Stories, Number 279

March 5, 1955

Africa, Land of Contrasts

The United States, big as it is, could almost be fitted into one-fourth of the continent of Africa. Most of this vast continent is in the tropics, with the equator crossing it through the middle. But because of the great differences in altitude, the climate is not all tropical.

Africa is a great plateau with an average altitude of 2000 feet. When we remember that Chicago is only 600 feet above sea level we realize that the altitude of Africa is high. The coast line is even, with few inlets or harbors.

There are many different kinds of country in Africa, and strange and beautiful scenery. To the north is the hot dry Sahara desert, about as large as the United States, and south of that are the tropical-forest regions of the Niger and Congo rivers. To the east and south are open grasslands where the grass may grow as high as ten feet. Here in the dry season, between June and October, the people of the region burn the grass to fertilize the soil, and great columns of fire sweep over the land, driving game from shelter. This is a time for hunting and plenty.

In the eastern grasslands loom snow-capped mountains: Mount Kilimanjaro, Mount Kenya, and Ruwenzori. The word Ruwenzori means "cloud king" and is a fitting name, for rain falls there 350 days out of the year.

Running north and south in eastern Africa are the Rift valleys, great clefts in the earth. Some of these have filled with water, forming lakes such as Lake Tanganyika, which is 2100 feet below the level of the Indian Ocean. Lake Albert and Lake Kyoga empty into the Nile, and Lake Victoria is the second largest lake in the world.

Great rivers—the Nile, the Congo, the Niger, and the Zambezi—are highways of travel. But cataracts and rapids make navigation dangerous and sometimes impossible for miles. Victoria Falls in the Zambezi are higher than Niagara Falls. Their roar can be heard for ten miles, and the clouds of spray can sometimes be seen for seventy miles. It is little wonder that the neighboring people speak of the falls as the "smoke that thunders."

Animals in Africa are strange and exciting. Many of them you have seen in the zoo and in the movies. In the forests of West Africa live the hippopotamus, chimpanzee, gorilla, monkeys, and black forest-hog. Giraffe, zebra, and rhinoceros are found in the more open country, and great herds of antelopes abound in the grasslands. Lions sometimes hunt by day but are most active at night. Fewer animals live in the blazing Sahara, but even here are reptiles and mammals. African animals are important to the native hunters for food and have been an inspiration for African art and folklore.

The papyrus marshes of the Upper Nile teem with water birds. The whale-headed stork, the great crowned crane whose crest resembles the waving papyrus, the weaver bird that nests in the sedges, and the brilliant malachite kingfisher are a few of the fascinating varieties.

Africa is a land rich in resources of gold, diamonds, copper, rubber, cocoa, palm oil, and uranium, a land capable of producing far more than it does today. It is a land of contrasts and adventure, of grandeur and beauty. But more interesting than the land are its people. In the next eight stories you will learn more about this strange land, its fascinating people, and their different ways of life.

This page is for your own notes and illustrations

Second of a Series on

AFRICA AND ITS PEOPLE

EXPLORERS OF AFRICA

by

EDITH FLEMING

Raymond Foundation

Museum Stories, Number 280

March 12, 1955

Explorers of Africa

Long ago people believed that the earth was flat and if they went too far they might fall off the edge. They believed, too, that giants and monsters would attack them in far-away places. It took great courage for men to venture into unknown parts of the world. Yet there is a story that as early as 600 B.C. Phoenician mariners sailed around Africa. A hundred years later merchants from Carthage carried on a "silent trade" with the people of the northwest coast of Africa. They anchored their ships off the coast, took their merchandise to the shore, and returned to their ships. Soon the people on the shore came out with gold to exchange for the trade goods. Often the traders never saw each other, but trade was fair, and this kind of business was carried on for hundreds of years in Africa.

It was not until around 1400 that Prince Henry the Navigator, of Portugal, started a school for seamen and mariners, and exploration of the African coast began. The good maps and charts that Henry and his school collected aided sailors in exploring the African coast, and finally in 1487 Dias sailed around the tip of Africa. The waves were so high and the storms so fierce that he named the southernmost tip of Africa the "Cape of Storms." But later the Portuguese decided that this cape might make their fortunes, for beyond it lay India and the trade in spices. So they changed the name to the "Cape of Good Hope."

Ten years after the voyage of Dias, the Portuguese navigator Vasco da Gama rounded the Cape of Good Hope and sailed on to India. Soon Portuguese settlements sprang up along the African Coast. The Portuguese introduced corn, manioc, peanuts, and sweet potatoes, crops that have become of greatest importance to the farming peoples of Africa.

French, Belgian, English, and Dutch explorers followed the Portuguese. To reach the heart of Africa they sailed up the rivers. The Nile, Congo, Niger, and

Zambezi were roadways but dangerous ones. Great cataracts obstructed the course and whirlpools opened suddenly in the way. The adverse currents are difficult for modern steamers. How much more so for the smaller boats of that day! Many men lost their lives in the perilous exploration of Africa.

In the middle of the 19th century David Livingstone, a medical missionary, traveled on missionary journeys far into the heart of Africa, where he discovered Lake Nyasa and explored great tracts of land never before seen by Europeans or Americans. Before Livingstone, the map of Central Africa was almost a blank, but by his careful study he added more than any other explorer to the knowledge of African geography. In thirty years he traveled over one-third of Africa, from the Cape nearly to the equator and from the Atlantic to the Indian Ocean. For a long time no word came from Livingstone, and the people feared that he had died in the interior of Africa. At last a Welshman, Henry M. Stanley, was sent to find him.

Stanley had already lived through many adventures. He was only thirteen when he sailed to New Orleans as a cabin boy. He fought with the Indians and in the American Civil War and traveled in Turkey and Asia Minor before going to Africa. He was ready to explore even in the jungle. After many hardships he came upon Livingstone and together they explored Lake Tanganyika. On a second expedition Stanley discovered the source of the Congo.

From the time of Henry the Navigator through that of Livingstone and Stanley to the present, Africa with its promise of adventure and wealth has stirred the imagination of the world. Today, even more than in the past, this vast continent arouses our interest. Mining engineers look for wealth in the earth, artists copy the native arts, some scientists study the peoples of Africa and others the animals. So, you see, the future of this great continent is of importance to the whole world.

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Third of a Series on

AFRICA AND ITS PEOPLE

PEOPLES OF AFRICA

by

EDITH FLEMING

Raymond Foundation

CHICAGO NATURAL HISTORY MUSEUM
RESEARCH EDUCATION
FOUNDED 1893 BY MARSHALL FIELD

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March 19, 1955

Peoples of Africa

South of the Sahara is the true home of the Negro, but Negroes are to be found in almost all parts of the African continent. In the Sahara desert live the Arabs and the Tuaregs who have very dark skins but are not Negroes. Some of these people make their homes in the oases, where they raise date palms and grain with the help of irrigation. In the desert itself are the caravan people who use camels to travel from one oasis to another. And besides the oases and the sandy wastes there are rocky mountains where hide the villages of the Tuareg camel-herders.

Not all the Negroes of Africa look alike. The shortest people in the world are the Pygmies of the Ituri forest, who are only four feet six inches tall. The tallest people in the world, the Nilotic tribes, live in Africa too, on the other side of the continent at the headwaters of the Nile. The average height of these people is six feet five inches, and some may be as tall as seven feet.

Not only do the Negroes differ in their looks but in their way of life, according to the region where they live. In the Congo the women are farmers and the men hunt.

The Masai of East Africa look down on farming, for they are cattle herders, and their warlike young men spend their time in raiding for cattle or defending their herds from enemies. The Ovimbundu live on the high plateau of Angola, West Africa, where the women farm and the men herd cattle. In the old days they went on caravan journeys, not by camel like the Sahara people but on foot, sometimes all the way across the continent. Even now they take journeys, trading cloth, wax, and wire and receiving in return cattle, which are their measure of wealth and importance.

The Bushmen of the Kalahari Desert of South Africa are neither farmers nor herdsmen but hunters who live a difficult life in a barren country, the men hunting and the women gathering roots and berries.

So, you see, we cannot speak of the African people or of the African way of life because there are many peoples and several ways of life, all interesting and different.

Tuareg
Nilotic Tribes
Masai
Bakongo
Pygmy
Ovimbundu
Bushman

This page is for your own notes and illustrations

Fourth of a Series on

AFRICA AND ITS PEOPLE

THE PEOPLE OF THE VEIL

by

EDITH FLEMING

Raymond Foundation

Museum Stories, Number 282

March 26, 1955

The People of the Veil

"Shame enters the family that tills the soil" is a proverb of the Tuaregs of the Sahara. These people look down on all labor except tending and raising camels, for they are caravan people. When they go to the oases or the villages in the mountains of Air, their manners show their scorn of the farming people, though actually the villagers and the nomads could not manage without each other. The villagers furnish food and markets for the nomads, and in turn the desert folk protect the village people and keep them in touch with the country beyond their oasis.

The name Tuareg is an Arabian word meaning "people of the veil," for the Tuareg men go veiled with only their eyes and foreheads showing. Strangely enough, the women wear no veils although these people are Mohammedans who usually veil their women and keep them in seclusion.

The Tuareg camps are widely scattered, a few huts in one place and farther away a few more. These camel men live where there is grazing for their animals and not far from the water supply. But they never camp next to the well for fear of enemies. In the desert everyone goes to the water, and if an enemy does come in the night his footprints in the sand will give warning of his presence. The wells are never poisoned and no enemy is ever denied water, but strangers are always suspected. In the minds of the nomads there is always fear of a raid, and men around the campfires or on caravan journeys mutter together of the danger. They are ever on the alert.

The Tuaregs hide their camps as much as possible, always remembering to provide a way of escape in case of attack. They may choose a spot near rocky hills or in a dry

river-gully. Their huts are small and dome-shaped, like molehills, so that they blend into the landscape. They are simply made of poles tied together, with grass matting or skins thrown over them. Inside is a couch, about a foot high, that almost fills the hut, and here the whole family sits or lies crowded together. These nomads have few possessions, and those they have are easily moved. If there is a raid, they have little to lose.

Once a year a great caravan crosses the desert to obtain salt, an important article of trade in Africa. Most of the Sahara is too dry for men to live, and the route of this caravan goes through the most arid region. There are few wells. Food for men and camels must be carried, and fodder for the return journey is left at certain spots. All the men of the desert are eager to go on this trip. There may be 7000 camels, four or more abreast, stretching in a great caravan seven miles across the desert.

The departure is as exciting as Christmas day with us. These people have no calendar; the date is decided by the new moon, and all the men and camels gather well in advance of the day. They camp on the side of a river-bed—animals, men, bales of fodder, skins of water everywhere. Only the pick of the animals can go, but, even so, many die by the way, for the hardships are very great. On the trail men rise at three or four in the morning before the sun is up and plod steadily on in cruel sun and heat, two and a half miles an hour, forty miles a day, never stopping until two hours after sundown.

Camels are always noisy when they are being unloaded, but when they are tired, as they are after the long march, they complain loudly. The roaring of the camels fills the camp, and the noise keeps up far into the night as the end of the long caravan drags slowly into camp. You may wonder why the Tuaregs are willing to undergo such an ordeal. Perhaps it is because everyone knows that only the strong can take the journey.

The Tuaregs are a warlike people, proud and aloof. They dominate the desert, and it is they who have given a romantic glamour to our thoughts of the life of the nomad.

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Fifth of a Series on

AFRICA AND ITS PEOPLE

THE BAKONGO

by

EDITH FLEMING

Raymond Foundation

Museum Stories, Number 283

April 2, 1955

The Bakongo

There is a special sound early in the morning in the villages along the lower Congo. It is the rattle of ankle rings as the women stream from their homes to work on their farms on the outskirts of the village. Many women carry hoes and empty calabashes in the baskets balanced on their heads. Young women have their babies tied to their backs with a piece of old cloth or they lead a little one by the hand. It is too early in the morning and too cold for much talking. Only the rattle of the jewelry is heard; but as the sun grows warmer and the women get on with their work, they laugh and gossip and scold. The mothers keep their babies tied to their backs as they work, for snakes and wild animals may lurk near by and it would not be safe to leave babies in the shade of the trees.

Many of the crops of the lower Congo came originally from the New World: manioc from the tropical forests of South America and maize, peanuts, and sweet potatoes from the Americas. All farm work is done by hand, and the women work hard in the fields until late afternoon. When they at last turn homeward, they carry the baskets full of food on their heads, a calabash of water slung over their backs. The mothers of babies put the calabash in the basket and balance all this on their heads so that the babies can still ride on their backs. Everyone is full of jokes, and when they reach the village, the old, the little ones, and the sick come out of the shade to greet them.

The men and boys, who have been working in the forest, have been to market, or have gone hunting, come to meet them too. Everyone looks with hungry eyes at the baskets and a buzz of talk fills the air.

The evening meal is the only real meal of the day. The women furnish the vegetables, and it is the duty of the men to add meat and fish to the diet. The bitter manioc root is poisonous and must be soaked in a hole of water, which makes the water-pit take on an evil smell. But this does not bother the people of the Congo, who eat manioc cooked as bread or pudding. A piece of pudding is broken off,

rolled between the fingers, and dipped in gravy. Then it is popped into the mouth and swallowed whole, for if it were chewed it would stick to the teeth like caramels.

Girls are trained by their mothers to fetch water, sweep the house and yard, and cook. They must be able to do all these things if they hope to make a good marriage. Fathers train their sons to hunt and trade in the market. The men are born traders and take local products to market, sometimes walking miles with little to eat by the way. When they get home, they eat heavily to make up for the poor and meager food on the journey. Fathers also teach the boys to sew, for it is the custom with these people for the men to do the sewing.

The large villages are laid out in streets, and each man expects the women of his household to sweep inside his yard and the lane around his house even though the grass in the backyard is as tall as the roof. The women do this every morning before they go to the fields. Neighbors jeer at a man whose yard is untidy.

Long ago, in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, these people were united in the Kingdom of the Kongo. Today the kingdom has shrunk in size, but there is still a king to rule over them. In spite of the heat and humidity along the lower Congo, the Bakongo are an industrious people, their villages are well laid out, neat, and clean, and the king enforces law and order in his kingdom.

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Sixth of a Series on

AFRICA AND ITS PEOPLE

THE MASAI

by

EDITH FLEMING

Raymond Foundation

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The Masai

South of the Sahara lies the high northern plateau, the home of the cattle-herding peoples of East Africa. From north to south the plateau is torn by deep rifts, grassy valleys where the Masai build their kraals and herd their cattle during the wet season. Although this is almost on the equator, the altitude is so high that the climate is cooler than in the tropical forests of the Congo, for in the grasslands the days are warm and sunny and the nights are cool. In the dry season many of the Masai move up onto the plateau where the grass grows three to four feet high with here and there a towering flat-topped acacia tree to break the monotony. The grass turns brown during the dry season, but it is still good for grazing.

Each elderly father of the Masai owns a kraal or encampment for his family and cattle. He chooses the site carefully, near a salt lick and in the shelter of trees. The huts are built around a fenced-in space where the cattle are kept at night, and a thick thorn-hedge surrounds the whole camp to protect it against enemies and wild animals. Each wife builds her own hut of grass plastered with mud and cow dung, which makes a hard shell. But in the rainy season the women place skins over their houses to keep the walls from being washed away. There are no windows in the huts; they are dark. But this does not matter because they are used only at night and in bad weather.

The Masai have a saying, "A cow is as good as a man," and it is true that cattle are very important to them, being a measure of a man's wealth and position. They treat their humpbacked, great-horned cattle well. Each animal has its own name, and the master has his favorites among the herd. The Masai never kill a cow for food, but they do eat meat from other domestic animals. Milk is one of their chief foods, and they churn butter by patiently shaking a gourd for long hours until the butter comes.

Each boy of the Masai tends his father's herds; but when he reaches the age of sixteen, a great and exciting change comes into his life. Now he is a warrior. He

leaves home with the other young men of his age and lives in a kraal that their mothers have built for them. The Masai are very warlike and lord it over their neighbors. Naturally the young warriors rank high in the tribe because their special duty is to raid their neighbors for cattle and to protect their own camp from return raids.

Lion hunting is a favorite sport and proves a young man's courage. He uses no gun, but a spear, fighting the lion at close range. The successful hunter proudly flaunts the lion's mane as his headdress.

The young man leads a warrior's life until he is about thirty. Then he and the other men of his age become elders, giving up the glories of war to the younger men who have grown up to take their places. As an elder a man marries and sets up a kraal of his own. With the other elders he plans raids, but he cannot force the warriors to carry them out because he has no real authority. So, you see, each man as he grows up goes through three stages—first the boy, then the warrior, and finally the elder. But to the Masai, the life of the warrior is the most glorious. These tall, handsome people admire courage and daring and hold these qualities as ideals for their young men.

The Masai need pasturage for their cattle; so they live in widely scattered settlements. This, with their love of war and raids, may be why they have never founded a great political state like the large agricultural kingdoms in the tropical forest region of the west coast of Africa.

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Seventh of a Series on

AFRICA AND ITS PEOPLE

THE PEOPLE OF THE FOG

by

EDITH FLEMING

Raymond Foundation

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The People of the Fog

The Ovimbundu, who live high on the plateau of central Angola in West Africa, are called the "People of the Fog" because of the fog that covers their hills early in the morning. The men are great travelers. In the old days they journeyed on foot in caravans sometimes 4000 miles, carrying with them to other tribes wax, cotton cloth, tobacco, and brass wire for jewelry and returning home with cattle, oxen, and heifers. Even today they take many short trading trips and often talk of far places.

In trading they measure very carefully everything they sell, but their measurements are not like ours. They stretch cotton cloth to the width of a man's arms from one hand to the other and then cut it with a knife. Palm oil they measure in a gourd. They take along rations for their trips, and each man's food is measured in a basket with a line woven into it to show just how much he is allowed. Sometimes on long journeys the leader keeps account of the days by cutting a notch in a stick each day.

The Ovimbundu, like good travelers, make things as easy for themselves as possible on their journeys. Each man carries a burden of sixty pounds on his head. The load is tied to a long, forked stick so that, when he stops to rest, he can put the stick upright in the ground. After a rest the leader calls, "Up with your loads and give us a song," and, without bending, the carriers lift their forked sticks and swing into line. One of them starts a chant, "Red ant that creeps along, you who are in the way, get out!" and they all take up the song. As he walks each man limps, not because he is lame or tired but because in this way he can rest his leg muscles with every step he takes.

On the return journey they are very proud if they can drive home many cows, for cattle are their measure of importance and wealth. They do not eat them, except at a funeral or a great feast, and they seldom use milk and never eat butter or cheese. Yet they have a saying, "Without cattle a man is a nobody." Naturally their greatest ambition is to own large herds of cattle.

There are professional hunters who procure most of the meat for the village. These men must have training from an older professional hunter before they are qualified. They use bows and arrows, but sometimes a hunter may own an old-fashioned muzzle-loading gun. Though the Ovimbundu eat meat when they can get it, vegetables are their chief food. The men clear the land and the women raise the crops of maize, oats, barley, beans, and sweet potatoes.

The women pound the corn into flour on a pounding rock that has been in use in the village for years. They get up at five o'clock in the morning to pound the corn, and all day long until the sun sets the pounding rock is in use. It is back-breaking work, but the women laugh and sing and chatter together at the pounding rock. It is a cheerful meeting place. Though grit from the rock gets into the flour, no one seems to mind.

The women prepare two meals a day. The first one, between five and six in the morning, is corn-meal mush eaten with sweet potatoes. For dinner at night there is a mush of beans, about three pounds for each person. The men do not eat with the family, but their wives take their food to the men's house. Then the women go back home and eat alone or with their young children.

These people have professions. There are blacksmiths, hunters, and leaders of caravans. Life is changing for the People of the Fog as foreign influences come in, but they cling as much as possible to the old beliefs and customs.

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Eighth of a Series on

AFRICA AND ITS PEOPLE

THE BUSHMEN

by

EDITH FLEMING

Raymond Foundation

Museum Stories, Number 286

April 23, 1955

The Bushmen

Early in the morning the Bushman camp is astir. The women get up first and start the fire and prepare breakfast, usually leftovers from the night before. After breakfast everyone leaves for work. In the old days in the Kalahari Desert game was more plentiful than it is today, and the men furnished most of the food by hunting. Today game is scarce, and many of the larger animals have been killed. There is too little water for farming, and the wild plants and vegetables that the women gather are the main food of the Bushmen. Often they must go hungry.

In the morning the men leave first for the hunt, and the women soon set off in another direction to gather wild vegetables. The little children follow their mothers in single file. As soon as they can, the women turn homeward, but sometimes they must go long distances in the search for food; so it may be late afternoon before they get back to camp. Quickly on the way back the women gather firewood to cook the evening meal. The children help so that the food will be ready when the men come home.

Each family eats by itself in its hut, but after dinner is the time they enjoy when everyone goes visiting. The women go to one hut and the men gather in another to talk. Perhaps they will speak of the day's hunt, and one man may tell how he tracked an antelope for many miles after he had hit it with a poisoned arrow. The force of the arrow could not kill it, but the poison took slow effect while the hunter followed until at last the animal dropped.

In the meantime, the women chat and the children play. No one sends them to bed; they go when they are tired. But bedtime is usually early for everyone. Sometimes, if it is an especially fine moonlight night and there has been enough to eat for dinner, the girls will begin to clap their

hands in rhythm. This is a signal for a dance, and soon everyone is dancing except a few old grandfathers. The boys tie dried cocoons to their legs to make a rattling noise, and then they may do a dance to imitate the wild animals they hunt. They may dance almost all night.

The Bushman's home in the dry season is only a wind-screen made perhaps by sticking bunches of grass onto a bush. But in the rainy season the hut is a semicircle with the open side away from the wind and rain and shifted according to the direction of the storm. Inside the hut the dirt floor has been scooped out a little and filled with grasses to make a cozy nest. The family curls up, each one wrapped in an animal-skin blanket, which is a cape to be worn in the daytime.

Water is the great problem in this dry country, and the water supply determines the number of people who can live in any area. Animals as well as men must move in search of water, for they depend upon the grasses that grow beside the water-holes. It is the duty of the older children to go to the water-hole each day to get the supply of water. Instead of pails, they carry ostrich-egg shells that they fill with water. Then they fit in a grass plug, so that none of the precious water can spill. Putting the shells in net bags, they sling them over their shoulders and go back to camp. Their duty is very important.

We have no history of the Bushmen because they cannot read or write, but we know something of how they lived long ago. Their ancestors painted and carved pictures on the rocks showing the animals they hunted and the wars they fought. Their traditions tell that they once lived in a more favorable country, but they were pushed back into the dry Kalahari Desert where life is difficult, and only their hard work and knowledge of the country make it possible for them to survive.

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Ninth of a Series on

AFRICA AND ITS PEOPLE

AFRICAN ARTISTS

by

EDITH FLEMING

Raymond Foundation

Museum Stories, Number 287

April 30, 1955

African Artists

Almost every village of Africa has its artists. There are wood carvers, smiths, house builders, and workers in ivory and leather.

Although in Africa people often sit on the ground around the fire, the wood carvers make stools to use in the homes. In the old days these stools were carved out of one solid piece of wood, but today they have a seat with four legs fitted on much like our chairs and stools. In one part of Africa even beds are made out of one piece of wood beautifully carved with heads of men and elephants. The wood carver's work is always in demand, for all over Africa are markets that attract people from neighboring villages and a brisk trade is carried on.

Africans, as we all know, are fine musicians with an excellent sense of rhythm. The most important instrument is the drum, and the wood carver must know the kind of trees that make the best drums. For the great drums, sometimes four feet high, that stand on either side of the chief's house he searches in the forest for a huge tree, for the drum must be made of one solid piece. Around it he carves human figures in intricate design. Some drums have leather tops, so that the leather worker and the carver must co-operate in making them. The most interesting drum is the signal or "talking drum" made of wood with painted decorations. The drummer has to be specially trained to send a kind of telegraph message to the next village. In the old days it was often

a warning against intended attack, but now it may be an invitation to the people for miles around to come together for a dance. Dancing, too, is an art in Africa, and young and old delight in it.

Besides the wood carvers there are ivory carvers who do beautiful work with the tusks of the elephant. Some of the most successful elephant hunters are the tiny Pygmies of the Ituri forest, who steal up behind an elephant, cut its leg tendons so it cannot escape, and spear it. The Pygmies trade the tusks to their neighbors.

Long ago, Negro kings in West Africa had many workers in ivory in their city of Benin who carved the great elephant tusks. Besides carving, the artists learned to smelt copper and tin to make bronze. They cast the boiling metal into molds to make statues and heads. Bronze work requires great skill, and the art of the people of Benin amazed the Portuguese explorers when they found the city in the tropical forest about 450 years ago.

Only strong boys can learn to be smiths. A boy must go through careful training for several years, but when he has learned the trade, his master makes him a set of tools and he can set up his own forge. The smiths make the hoes to be used in the fields and jewelry for the women as well as arrow heads and spear points for the men. A boy who can set up his own forge is proud and happy. He is his own master and is respected for his work.

There are potters in Africa, bead workers, and weavers, all skilled in their arts. There are families of weavers, forming guilds: the fathers pass on their art to their sons. Among the Ashanti, a large native kingdom of the West Coast, new designs in weaving used to be shown to the king. The ones he chose became royal designs that could not be copied by anyone else. Each design had a name by which it was called, and customers ordered the design by name. Many of the vigorous and unusual designs of African artists have affected our modern styles in textiles and interior decoration. All over the world, artists have studied and admired the best work of the artists of Africa and have received inspiration from their original approach.

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